

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

July 25, 2003

For immediate release

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## **BEACHES REMAIN POSTED AT BEEDS LAKE AND ROCK CREEK; ADVISORY REMOVED AT BACKBONE LAKE**

DES MOINES — Swimming advisories will remain posted at Rock Creek Lake in Jasper County and Beeds Lake in Franklin County. A swimming advisory at Backbone Lake in Delaware County has been removed.

Lakes that are being re-sampled this week are North Twin Lake in Calhoun County which had an E. coli level of 280 and Emerson Bay at the Great Lakes in Dickinson County which had a reading of 390. The standard for a one-time sample is 235. Neither of these lakes have had a history of bacteria problems in previous years of monitoring. Both will be re-tested and if the levels continue to be high, advisory signs would be posted next week.

Rock Creek Lake had an E.coli count of 20, down significantly from previous weeks, but remains posted because its geometric mean of 139 exceeds the acceptable level of 126 that includes at least five samples taken over a minimum of 30 days. Beeds Lake had a reading of 80 and a geometric mean of 159.

Bacteria levels at beaches typically rise as a result of runoff from rainfall and can return to normal in less than two days with sunny conditions. Samples are collected from the beaches on Monday and Tuesday. There was widespread rain over much of Iowa in the last week likely elevating bacteria levels at some locations.

Bacteria levels at Iowa's other state park beaches are within acceptable levels.

The DNR is also advising normal precautions for contact with any surface water in Iowa:

- Avoid swallowing the water
- Avoid the water if you have open cuts or wounds that could become infected by contact with bacteria
- Swimming is not recommended for persons who are very young or very old and may have problems avoiding ingestion of water, and people who have weakened immune systems due to other medical conditions.

Weekly beach monitoring results are posted on the DNR's website every Friday afternoon at <http://www.iowadnr.com/news/beach.html>

**For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395 or Janice Boekhoff, 319-335-1574.**

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## **DNR PROGRAM REACHES 100TH SEPTIC SYSTEM LOAN**

DES MOINES — Since last July, the Iowa DNR's Onsite Wastewater Systems Assistance Program (OSWAP) has helped finance the replacement of nearly 100 substandard septic systems in Iowa. DNR Director Jeffrey Vonk will be on site at the installation of the 100th system near Washington on August 6.

The installation of the new onsite septic system will take place at the home of Ken Miller, three miles north of Washington. Federation Bank of Washington is the participating lender issuing the loan for the new system.

OSWAP offers low interest loans, at a maximum rate of 3%, through participating lenders to homeowners who need to replace failing or inadequate septic systems.

With an estimated 100,000 substandard septic systems in Iowa, replacement of those systems is key to improving Iowa's water quality.

"Both inadequate and failing systems can pollute groundwater and surface waters with untreated domestic sewage that contains fecal coliform bacteria, *E. coli*, nitrates and human feces," said Steve Hopkins, DNR environmental specialist. "These systems pose a particular threat to children, as well as adults with compromised immune systems, who are exposed to untreated wastewater. Children can come into direct contact with untreated sewage when they play in road ditches, backyards or creeks that have illegal septic tank outlets piped to them."

Each Iowa household on a septic system generates approximately 150 to 200 gallons of wastewater per day, and with an estimated 100,000 inadequate household septic systems in Iowa, roughly 15 to 20 million gallons of untreated wastewater are dumped into the

Iowa environment each day, according to Hopkins. This untreated wastewater contributes to water quality problems in Iowa lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater.

Septic system inspection ordinances at the time of sale of a property are mandatory in 17 Iowa counties. OSWAP can help finance the replacement of substandard septic systems identified by county inspections.

Participants in OSWAP receive interest rates of 3 percent or less on loans that range between \$2,000 and \$10,000, for a maximum repayment period of 10 years. After the participant's loan is approved by a lender, and the new septic system is installed and approved by the county sanitarian, the DNR transfers the loan deposit from the Onsite Wastewater Assistance Fund (OSWAF) to the local lender. The homeowner then repays the lender.

"One of the economic benefits of this program is that the loans are kept in the local community," said Hopkins.

The Onsite Wastewater Systems Assistance Fund is a revolving loan fund authorized by the Iowa Legislature and funded by state appropriations and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act.

**For more information, contact Stephen Hopkins, DNR environmental specialist, at 515-725-0346. For information about participating lenders and counties, visit the OSWAP Web page at: [www.onsiteiowa.com](http://www.onsiteiowa.com).**

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## **DNR SLEUTHING FOR EXCESSIVE LIVESTOCK ODORS**

DES MOINES — State inspectors are testing odor levels and responding to odor complaints as part of a comprehensive study to determine air quality near large animal feeding operations.

The effort began in April, after Department of Natural Resources inspectors received training and certification for odor detection methods.

The odor study stems from state legislation that called for comprehensive reviews of air quality near animal feeding operations. Hydrogen sulfide and ammonia gas monitoring began in April of 2002 as part of the effort.

"We are studying worst case odor conditions near large animal confinements, during manure applications and after odor complaints from nearby homeowners," said Sean Fitzsimmons, who heads the DNR's air monitoring program.

After the field study, the DNR may develop control programs if the study reveals odors are excessive.

“The study data will determine if odor downwind of animal feeding operations, manure spreading and during times when complaints are received is excessive,” said Fitzsimmons.

So far, 54 tests have been conducted under the ongoing study, with eight testing positive for excessive odor.

To conduct the review, 34 DNR field staff from six regional offices across Iowa underwent daylong training after those with unusually high or low smell sensitivities were eliminated by controlled tests.

“Each inspector is certified annually and must pass monthly sensitivity tests,” said Fitzsimmons. The testing equipment is calibrated and certified annually. The equipment, known as olfactometers or scentometers, are hand-held devices that dilute odorous air with filtered air. The inspector inhales the sample to determine odor concentrations. The devices have been in use around the nation for 40 years.

The odorous air is diluted seven times with filtered air. If an odor is detected after dilution, it is excessive, a standard used in several states. Positive tests are followed with upwind measurements and a second downwind test at least 15 minutes but no more than 60 minutes from the first test. Wind data is also collected.

St. Croix Sensory, a Minnesota based company, conducted training for the DNR. The company has over ten years of experience, training hundreds of government and industry employees and citizen organizations.

All of the air quality studies are required under legislation passed in 2002.

Iowans can view odor data results at [www.iowacleanair.com](http://www.iowacleanair.com).

To report excessive agricultural related odors, call appropriate regional DNR field office:

Northeast Office, Manchester, (563)-927-2640  
North Central, Mason City, (641)-424-4073  
Northwest, Spencer, (712)-262-4177  
Southwest, Atlantic, (712)-243-1934  
Southcentral, Des Moines, (515)-725-0268  
Southeast, Washington, (319)-653-2135

**For more information contact the DNR’s Brian Button at 515-281-7832.**

## **DNR ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS**

DES MOINES — The DNR has taken the following enforcement actions. Responsible parties have 30 days to appeal the charges or 60 days to pay the penalty.

- Larry Noel, of Floyd County, was ordered to pay a \$2,000 penalty and comply with minimum manure control requirements. The order has been appealed.
- Larry Pogue and Independence Mobile Home Park, of Independence, was ordered to pay a penalty of \$2,000 and sample the public water supply for bacteria at least five times a month; properly operate, monitor and report relating to disinfection facilities; sample the water supply and comply with all monitoring requirements in the future; provide public notice of monitoring deficiencies; and distribute and report the annual consumer confidence report.
- James Masching, of Carroll, was ordered to pay a \$5,000 penalty and comply with all manure control requirements.
- Kevin Hohback, of Red Oak, was ordered to pay a penalty of \$2,000, comply with manure application requirements and submit an accurate manure management plan by September 1, 2003.
- The City of Woodbine was ordered to provide public notice regarding a violation of the maximum contaminant level for nitrate. They were also ordered to provide bottled water meeting FDA standards, report monthly, remove a well from service and continue to sample the drinking water.
- Rural Iowa Solid Waste Management Association, of Hardin County, was ordered to provide daily and intermediate cover on all landfill solid waste; cease the use of sand as cover material; limit the unloading of solid waste; cease the disposal of municipal solid waste and prohibited yard waste in the construction and demolition disposal area; and pay a \$3,400 penalty. The order has been appealed.
- Denny Geer, of Taylor County, was ordered to stop open burning of combustible materials; cease the illegal disposal of solid waste; remove all illegally disposed of solid waste and dispose of it properly; submit documentation of proper disposal; and pay a penalty of \$3,000. The order has been appealed.
- Mobile World, LC, of Clinton County, was ordered to cease the improper disposal of solid waste; remove and legally dispose of all remaining solid waste on the property; provide documentation of proper disposal; and pay a penalty of \$2,250.
- The City of Stockton was ordered to retain a properly certified public water supply operator at all times and to pay a \$200 fine.
- Gingerich Well and Pump Service, LLC, Corwin Gingerich and Klint Gingerich, of Kalona, were ordered to cease future violations of public and private well construction and permitting rules, reconstruct an underground vault and pay a \$4,300 penalty. The order has been appealed.

**For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.**